

Best Management Practices

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION



Blanding's Turtle

Emydoidea blandingii

Common name • Blanding's Turtle

Scientific name • *Emydoidea blandingii*

State status • Endangered

Ecology

Blanding's turtles occur in many states in the Midwest and into southern Ontario. There also are isolated populations in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. In Missouri, they inhabit wetland areas in the northeastern corner of the state. Blanding's turtles, which are semi-aquatic in nature, spend time in marshes, water holes, sloughs, streams and ponds with relatively dense vegetation, but they also may be found in grasslands. They are active from late March to early October and overwinter in mud at the bottom of marshes or ponds. Breeding occurs between early April and mid-July and again from mid-August through mid-September. Females lay 6-15 eggs in a sandy, dry soil that is well-exposed to sunlight. Young hatch in September. Blanding's turtles eat crayfish, aquatic larvae of insects, some terrestrial insects and frogs.

Reasons for Decline

It is likely that Blanding's turtles were never more widespread in Missouri than they are currently. However, destruction of wetlands and swamps for agriculture and urbanization projects has eliminated habitat for these turtles and limited their range here. In addition, degradation of remaining habitat because of non-point source pollution continues to threaten the status of the Blanding's turtle in Missouri.

Specific Recommendations

Protection and restoration of wetlands is critical for the survival of many species, including the Blanding's turtle. Due to the year-round requirement these animals have on wetlands, impacts on these areas within the range of this species should be minimized.

→ Avoid removing or destroying unique habitat features, such as downed trees, that provide habitat for the Blanding's turtle.

→ Draining or destroying known wetland habitat should be prohibited.

→ Erosion and sediment controls should be implemented, maintained and monitored for the duration of the project.

→ Disposal of wastes and garbage should be done in designated areas far from wetlands.

→ Avoid altering water levels in wetlands where Blanding's turtles are present.

General Recommendations

→ Refer to Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Wetlands and Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Streams and Rivers.

→ Refer also to Amphibian and Reptile Management Guidelines.

Information Contacts

For further information regarding regulations for development in wetlands, rivers and streams, contact:

Missouri Department of Conservation
Policy Coordination Section
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2901 W. Truman Blvd
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180
Telephone: 573/751-4115

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Division of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
Telephone: 573/526-3315

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Regulatory Branch
700 Federal Building
Kansas City, MO 64106-2896
Telephone: 816/983-3990

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, KS 66101
Telephone: 913/551-7307

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
608 E. Cherry Street, Room 200
Columbia, MO 65201
Telephone: 573/876-1911

Disclaimer

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